

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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03. Memcon	Re: Meeting with Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister-Designate of Singapore (5 pp.)	4/16/90	(b)(1)	S

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RESTRICTION CODES

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- P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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MEMCON

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

2886 Add-On

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister
Designate of Singapore (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and
Deputy for National Security Affairs
Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary of State for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Robert D. Orr, U.S. Ambassador to Singapore
Karl D. Jackson, Senior Director for Asian
Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister-Designate
George Yeo Yong Boon, Minister of State for
Finance and Foreign Affairs
Tommy Koh Thong Bee, Ambassador to the U.S.

DATE, TIME April 16, 1990, 2:00 - 2:20pm EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President commented on one of the issues shouted out by the reporters. (U)

The President: Lithuania is on everyone's mind. It is a front burner item. As these pressures mount, it is difficult to maintain all of the other things we want to accomplish with the Soviets such as arms control. (U)

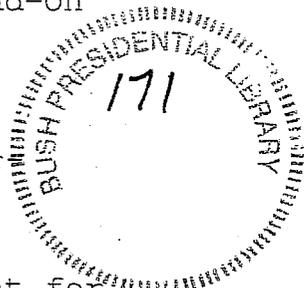
Welcome. I don't need to tell you how important the relationship with Singapore is to us. Likewise, we have a special affection for Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. We are very pleased with how things stand in our general relationship at the present time. We are all fascinated by the changes in Eastern Europe, and in this hemisphere where new, young leaders are appearing. We do not want any of this to create the impression that we want to disengage from the Pacific. We consider ourselves a Pacific power and intend to remain one. We have been grateful for advice on the Philippines from Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. I hope we can resolve the matter with the Philippines. I am interested in your opinions regarding the Philippines. We are very grateful for your willingness to increase American presence. We are grateful for your flexibility in these matters because we do want to stay in Asia. We appreciate what you have been doing very much. (S)

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8/21/2009
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PM-Designate Goh: I have a message from the Prime Minister. He wants to congratulate you on the way you have handled China and he is pleased with your initiative at Palm Springs, getting the Japanese to restructure their economic system. The United States is a world power and should remain a Pacific power. We want you to remain as an active force in the region. The Philippines remains a problem. We are not sure that Aquino can pull the country through its crisis. Frankly, we are more pessimistic than two years ago in terms of Aquino's ability to govern the country. The Filipinos want the bases to remain in the Philippines. However, they are unrealistic. The world has changed. We are not sure we will be able to get them to see reality. (S)

The President: We greatly appreciate the Prime Minister's advice and we have been able to keep it confidential. Please tell him I appreciate the message you have delivered very much. (S)

PM-Designate Goh: Regarding the Philippines, you should not leave unless you are forced to leave. If you are forced out, Brunei and Thailand or even a small island off Singapore would provide a location for your presence. (S)

The President: There has been discussion of increased U.S. presence in Singapore. We are very grateful for this. Are you optimistic about change in Vietnam? (S)

PM-Designate Goh: There will be no significant change until the old leaders go in the next 2 - 3 years. (S)

The President: I am a little pessimistic about the Philippines. The support we gave her at the time of the coup has complicated matters for her politically. (S)

There is a big change in the U.S. Many Americans feel we have done our part in Europe and are asking what we are going to do about Cleveland, Ohio or the homeless in New York City. (S)

We are worried that President Aquino has had some slippage in being able to hold it all together in the Philippines. (S)

PM-Designate Goh: You should put it to the Philippines in very straight terms, that you cannot be asked for just everything. There are limits. (S)

The President: We want to maintain our relationship with them. I am not relaxed about stability there at all. (S)

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PM-Designate Goh: It is important to remember that she is the only one who can do so. (S)

The President: Will there be another coup? Will she survive? (S)

PM-Designate Goh: There will be another coup, but she will survive. We think she became a lame duck because she announced that she would not stand for President again. (S)

(b) (1)

The President: I wish we could be as confident that we are near victory. You are right in sensing our unease. We have been disappointed in how coalition might work. Sihanouk looks less dependable to us, or am I being too harsh? (S)

PM-Designate Goh: (b) (1)

(b) (1)

Secretary Baker: We are not contemplating any move toward Hun Sen. Even if we were, it would not settle anything because neither the PRC nor the KR would cooperate. We need to find a way to a transitional regime. Only the PRC and the Soviets can decide. It does not matter what we (U.S. and ASEAN) do, so long as we do not withdraw totally. (S)

PM-Designate Goh: So long as we stay in the game, we will succeed. (S)

The President: Can you help me with your thoughts on the China issue? (S)

PM-Designate Goh: Do not isolate China. You should not condone what they have done, but you should know they are unlikely to change their policies. Jiang Zemin said to me "China is a huge

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mess and I am a huge mess (referring to his weight problem). If you want to come into this, you will get hurt." You must see this problem through until old guard passes away in China. Isolating China will not help the world. China is prepared to exist without the outside world. China will open up again when she has solved her internal political problems. (S)

The President: Zhao has not been kicked out of the party. We do not want to isolate China or be isolated from her. We have some trade decisions to be made by Congress. If this relationship is undone, it will result in further isolation for China. Ironically, China blames us for its troubles even though we are the restrained some of Western powers from moving more vigorously on economic sanctions. If China could do more in terms of amnesty or forgiveness, this would help. (S)

PM-Designate Goh: It remains up to them, but I do not think they are absolutely confident that they are in charge. (S)

Secretary Baker: We are looking forward to the APEC meeting that you will host. We have been approached by the press who have asked us not to go to the meeting in Singapore. We will go, of course. We want the reporting on the APEC meetings to concentrate on something other than the subject of press freedom. If you could take a look at this, it might be helpful. (S)

The President: I take it we are referring to the Wall Street Journal. Prime Minister Lee makes the call on this, but I think Jim Baker is right about how it will be played by the press. (S)

PM-Designate Goh: I will be giving an interview to the Wall Street Journal while I am here. (S)

Secretary Baker: Maybe you can declare victory on this issue... (and simply return to normal). (S)

PM-Designate Goh: We only need their recognition of our two positions: non-interference in our domestic politics and the government's right to regulate things in Singapore. (S)

The President: How is the economy moving? (S)

PM-Designate Goh: Our growth rate this year should be around 8 percent. (S)

The President: Delighted to see you. (U)

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In closing, the President reassured Prime Minister-Designate Goh that the U.S. had "No intention of shifting its priorities away from the Pacific. We are doing better with Japan. China remains a big anomaly." (S)

Prime Minister Designate Goh: I can assure you that there will be no change in our foreign policy with a new leadership. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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